

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHRISTMAS OF 1888.

Low in the east, against a white, cold dawn,
The black-lined silhouette of the woods was
drawn,

And on a wintry waste
Of frosted streams and hillsides bare and
brown,
Through thin cloud-films a pallid ghost
looked down,
The waning moon half-faced!

In that pale sky and sere, snow-waiting
earth,
What sign was there of the immortal birth?
What herald of the One?
Lo! swift as thought the heavenly radiance
came,
A rose-red splendor swept the sky like flame,
Up rolled the round, bright sun!

And all was changed. From a transfigured
world
The moon's ghost fled, the smoke of home-
hearths curled
Up the still air unblown.
In Orient warmth and brightness, did that
morn
O'er Nain and Nazareth, when the Christ
was born,
Break fairer than our own?

The morning's promise noon and eve ful-
filled,
In warm, soft sky and landscape hazy-
hilled,
And sunset fair as they;
A sweet reminder of His holiest time,
A summer-miracle in our winter clime,
God gave a perfect day.

The near was blended with the old and far,
And Bethlehem's hillside and the Magi's star
Seemed here, as there and then,—
Our homestead pine-tree was the Syrian
palm,
Our heart's desire the angels' midnight
psalm,
Peace and good will to men!
—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

"WHAT HAS THE BIRTH OF JESUS DONE FOR THE WORLD?"

*"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as
crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."
—REV. xxii. 1.*

What has the birth of Jesus done for man-
kind? It has brought God near to man.
Not by argument, not by demonstration to
the logical intellect, but by a great spiritual
influence, Jesus has made the presence of
God a reality to the human heart. Those
who were afar off are nigh. In all Christian
lands there is the sense of a divine presence
such as did not exist before Christ's coming.
He has put the spirit into our hearts by
which we say, "Abba! Father!" Jesus
has made it a joy to look up, to adore, to
worship, to love. This sense of a divine
presence has brought peace to troubled con-
sciences, to saddened hearts, to those on
whom life lays heavy burdens, to the lonely
and the bereaved.

There are those who tell us that there is
not as much religion now as formerly. They
point to the Middle Ages as the ages of faith.
What splendid cathedrals were built in the
thirteenth century! What magnificent ab-
beys and convents were thickly scattered
over the face of Europe! How many thou-
sands of monks and nuns lived only for

religion! How the majority of men in Christian lands fasted, confessed, attended public worship, and accepted the Christian faith without a doubt! But now, how impossible to erect such noble ecclesiastical monuments! Now, what multitudes have nothing to do with churches! How many call themselves agnostics, believing in nothing spiritual! How many more, wholly indifferent, do not take the trouble even to ask whether they believe anything or not.

We must admit there was formerly a great deal more of the external part of religion; but was there more of its essence? Men feared God more: did they love him better? Does love always show itself in outward ceremonies and forms? Does it not more often appear in perfect confidence, in entire trust? We do not now go so much to church to find God, but perhaps we feel his presence more in nature, life, science, literature, art. He is now "Immanuel, God with us." The whole world is now his temple. The stars and flowers sing his praise with voiceless lips,—

"Each cup a pulpit, and each bell a book."

The spirit of hope which pervades all Christian lands is an evidence of this sense of the presence of God. For there is no truer saying than that of Scripture, "Without God in the world, and so without hope." Those who are without God are also without hope. Hope is the sense of the Infinite in all finite things, of the perfect amid all imperfection, of a wise Providence guiding all events amid apparent accident, of a divine love superior to all sorrow and pain, and of a heavenly immortality conquering decay and death.

The first blessing, then, that Jesus has brought to mankind is the spirit of faith in an ever-present Goodness. Wherever Christianity has gone, it has made possible this communion of trust and love between the human child and the infinite Father. No doubt there have been in all lands and times saintly and prophetic souls who struggled up to an ecstatic intercourse with the divine spirit within them. Even Seneca said, "A sacred spirit is within us." But these have been mostly exceptional and occasional cases. This communion has not been for all mankind, but for a few select souls,—seers, saints, prophets. Nor with them has it been a common daily experience, but an occasional rapture. And more than this, instead of becoming a part of life, it has taken them out of life into the seclusion of monasteries of the lonely cell of the hermit. But the Christian influence is for all, for the humblest and lowliest and most

ignorant of God's children,—for the slave on the plantation, the prisoner in his cell, the mourner whose friends have gone away and left him alone, and yet he is not alone, for the Father is with him.

This is the greatest blessing which has come to mankind from the birth of Jesus,—the gift of faith in a divine love to every human child.

But let us notice that this is not a doctrine only, nor a belief, which Jesus has taught, but an influence proceeding from his life. It is described in our text as "a pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Thought and belief are propagated by teaching: knowledge and faith are communicated by spiritual influence. The man who really sees and knows everything by mental insight creates faith in others. This is the way in which Jesus came "to bear witness to the truth." It is the business of a witness to tell what he knows; not what he thinks, not what he has heard from others, but what he has seen himself. He is not to argue, that is the business of the advocate. He is not to repeat any hearsay statements. He is to speak what he knows and testify what he has seen. This was the work of Jesus, who said, "For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." Jesus seldom argues: he simply states the divine law as he sees it. And all truly inspired souls do the same. This is living truth, the living bread which comes down from heaven,—not dead knowledge in the memory, but life-giving insight. "I have come," said Jesus, "that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

Beside this faith in God another great gift of Jesus to mankind has been the constant hope of a better future,—hope of a day to come when mankind shall be free from ignorance, slavery, crime, and sin; hope for the triumph of truth over error, right over wrong, good over evil; hope for all mankind, when the extremes of poverty and wealth shall cease, when there shall be co-operation instead of competition, brotherhood instead of strife. This hope was born with Jesus. It did not exist before, except in the prophetic vision of the Jewish seers, or in some few select souls. But it passed from the soul of Jesus into the life of his disciples. It is not founded on logic, but on something more deep,—a new life in the soul. It is not an argument for hope, but it is an inspiration of hope. The Apostle Peter says, "We are new-born into a living

hope." This hope for mankind, coming in this way, is, like faith, a possession for all. It is an influence reaching far and wide, a heaven pervading the whole of society. This hope is in the atmosphere in all Christian lands. It does not depend on any argument, but on a living conviction below all argument. In all Christian lands there is a constant looking forward, a perpetual expectation of better days.

Why do science, literature, art flourish in Europe and America, and not in Asia, Africa, or China? Because of this spirit of hope, this universal belief in something newer, better, which fills the air. Other nations sleep, reposing on the past, not looking for anything different. Christian nations are always in a fever of expectation, expecting new discoveries in science and improvement in all arts. This is the prevailing spirit of Christendom, and this is the secret of its progress.

For without hope no progress is possible. He who expects much, receives much. "Seek, and ye shall find," is the key which opens all doors. Hope bears the golden key to the gates of the future. Doubt, unbelief, scepticism never create anything. If a man says, "Oh, it is no use, nothing can come of it; there is no use in trying; let us take things as they are—we cannot make them any better," it is certain, at least, that he is not the man to make them better. But, if you find a man with unfaltering anticipation of better things and better days, whom discouragements do not cast down nor disappointments check, who may fail again and again, but never loses hope of ultimate success,—he is the man to open the way to something higher and better.

The first blessing which the birth of Jesus has given to the world is faith in an ever-present divine love. The second blessing is the spirit of hope and progress. The third which I shall mention is the sense of immortality.

Here, as before, the sense of immortality has come to the world from Jesus, not as teaching of argument, but as influence and inspiration. The fulness of life in Jesus inspired a sense of life in the souls of his followers, which has been transmitted, generation after generation, to our own time. "He who liveth and believeth in me cannot die." Life abolishes death. The life of God and hope in the soul raise us above the fear of death. Death ceases to be anything. It is only a single step in the great march onward and upward.

We are God's children; he is our Father; and he is not the God of the dead, but of the

living. When our moral life is depressed, in hours of despondency and gloom, death may seem something real. But, when we walk in the sunshine of divine love and divine hope, it disappears altogether from our thought. We do not know much about the future life, and it is best that we should not. But we do know that there, as here, God will be our Father and Friend; there, as here, he will be the great Order and the Divine Beauty of the universe. There, as here, there will be homes and love and knowledge and the satisfaction of work. There, as here, must be the opportunity of progress, of perpetual ascent, of ever-new attainments, and ever-growing faculties and powers.

This is the work which the coming of Jesus has done. It is so broad, so inclusive, so patient of apparent contradiction, so hospitable to variety of tendency, that it necessarily takes a long time to reach a complete harmony. Christianity moves slowly, but continues to advance. It is able to purify itself from the abuses which rise in its bosom, to assimilate to itself the tendencies and convictions of different races, to generate reforms in its own community, and to throw off corruption of theology or morals which grow up in its own churches. It can always go back to the life and teachings of its founder for new inspiration, guidance, reproof, and instruction in righteousness. Therefore, Christ remains the Hope of the World. Therefore, every knee will bow to him because of his divine humanity, the adaptation of his truth to all wants of man, his sympathy with every human tendency; and in him "the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the building of itself up in love."

Thus we have "Christ in us, the Hope of glory," and we are made partakers of him "if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope, firm unto the end."

The thinkers who leave Christ are not the advanced thinkers, but the retrograde thinkers. They are turning away from the only Ideal which is leading the world forward.

Wherever Christmas dawns it dawns with hope. The child whose birth is now commemorated with joy and gifts in happy homes all over the world has brought, and is ever bringing, new and fair expectations to mankind. He is more and more bringing us to see God as our Father and man as our brother. He fills the soul evermore with new life. That is why the world keeps Christmas, and rejoices during all the centuries because of the birth of a child in a hamlet of Palestine.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

O Lovely Voices of the sky
 That hymned the Saviour's birth,
 Are ye not singing still, on high,
 Ye that sang Peace on Earth?
 To us yet speak the strains
 Wherewith in time gone by
 Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
 O Voices of the sky!

O clear and shining Light whose beams
 That hour heaven's glory shed
 Around the palms and o'er the streams,
 And on the shepherds' head!
 Be near through life and death,
 As in that holiest night
 Of hope and joy and faith,
 O clear and shining Light!

O Star that led to him whose love
 Brought down man's ransom free!
 Where art thou? 'Mid the host above
 May we yet gaze on thee?
 In heaven thou art not set;
 Thy rays earth may not dim;
 Send them to guide us yet,
 O Star that led to him!

—Mrs. Hemans.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS.

For the Lonely.

Lord God of the solitary, look upon me in my loneliness. Since I may not keep this Christmas in the home, send it into my heart. Let not my sins cloud me in, but shine through them with forgiveness in the face of the child Jesus. Put me in loving remembrance of the lowly lodging in the stable of Bethlehem, the sorrows of the blessed Mary, the poverty and exile of the Prince of Peace. For His sake give me a cheerful courage to endure my lot, and an inward joy to sweeten it.

Purge my heart from hard and bitter thoughts. Let no shadow of forgetting come between me and friends far away. Bless them in their Christmas mirth, and hedge me in with faithfulness, that I may not grow unworthy to meet them again.

Give me good work to do that I may forget myself and find peace in doing it for Thee. Though I am poor, send me to carry some gift to those who are poorer, some cheer to those who are lonelier, since they have not known the friendship of Jesus. Grant me the chance to do a kindness to one of His little ones, and light Thou my Christmas candle at the gladness of an innocent and grateful heart.

Strange is the path where Thou ledest me, but let me not doubt Thy wisdom, nor lose Thy hand to-day. Make me sure that the Eternal Love is forever unveiled in Jesus, Thy dear Son, to save us from sin and solitude and death. Teach me that I am not alone, but many hearts, all round the world, join with me through the silence while I pray in His Name, "Our Father which art in Heaven."—Henry Van Dyke.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club, to be printed here.

OFFERS.

"Black Beauty" is offered by Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

The Disciples Branch offers the following books: Address Miss Ethel L. Thayer, 463 Blue Hill Avenue, Grove Hall Station, Boston, Mass. Drawing Books; Morse's "North American Atlas"; Harper's "Geography"; Guyot's "Geography"; Mitchell's "Ancient Atlas"; Warren's "Physical Geography"; Harper's "School Geography"; "Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck"; Shakespeare's "Henry IV.," Part 1; "Fannie St. John"; Russell's "Young Ladies' Elocutionary Reader"; Hayward's "Book of Religions"; "Gustavus Lindrum," Emile F. Carlin; "Three Eras of Woman's Life," E. E. Smith; "The Children's Friend"; Swinton's "Golden Book of Choice Reading"; "First Reader," Stickney; "Questions on Select Portions of the Four Evangelists"; Emerson's "Essays"; "Night and Morning"; "Mehalah," Baring Gould; "Country Living and Country Thinking," Gail Hamilton; "Lady's Almanac" (1856); "Gift of Remembrance"; Hoyle's "Games"; Pamphlets on "Natural History"; "Belford Regis," M. Q. Mitford; "Works of Joseph Butler, LL.D."; Young's "Night Thoughts"; "Some Hints for Lent"; "Elizabeth," Madame Cottin; "Gulliver's Travels"; "Heaven our Home"; "Times of the Saviour," Harriet Martineau; "Genuine Receipts"; "Promises of Scripture"; Hawthorne's "Twice-told Tales"; "The Ideal

Man"; Milton's "Paradise Lost"; "The Boy of Bengal"; "First Lessons in Grammar"; Swinton's "Language Lessons"; Russell's "Exercises in Elocution."

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. I am a helpless invalid with only the use of my arms, besides being completely deaf. Am very fond of good reading and wish some one could send me the "Lives of the Presidents" in one volume, or the "Life of Abraham Lincoln." Any other good reading will be very acceptable. Respectfully, Fillmore Powers, Box 6, West Derby, Vermont.

2. Miss Elizabeth Blair, Presbyterian College, Charlotte, North Carolina, writes, "I should be so pleased to have the *Delineator* or *Ladies' Home Journal*, or any good periodical."

3. Miss D. A. H. Parsons, R. F. D. 2, Ottawa, Kansas, asks for the following: "Swiss Family Robinson," "Tales from Shakespeare."

4. I come to ask for books, magazines, or papers suitable for school girls and boys of all ages. I am a teacher in the public schools and am located for six months in a very undesirable part of the county, about fifteen miles from a town and five miles from a railroad. Anything in the form of books will be greatly appreciated and can be used to a good advantage in my work. I should also be glad of pictures with which I might improve the appearance of my school-room. Would be very grateful for books for myself and other reading for the children. I am very anxious for a correspondent and hope to be remembered soon. Miss Daisy Shelton. Care of Rev. A. C. Knibb, Spencer, Virginia.

5. I wish to thank all who have kindly remembered me in the past. I enjoy reading the *Cheerful Letter*, and would not part from it. I have been very tardy in expressing my thanks to those who have so kindly sent me books and papers, and also the lady from Germantown, Pennsylvania. The books have given me much pleasure. I have been a cripple all my life, can go out but very little. I wonder if some kind sisters would send me a few novels to read.

I will pass them on after I have read them. Lue Sims, Jamestown, Tennessee.

6. I write to ask if you would send me some literature. I am many miles from a railroad, receive mail twice a week; that is, when the roads are in a condition to go to the post-office. Respectfully, Katherine Dumphy, Casey, Clatsop County, Oregon.

7. It has been some time since I have written to you, and, as it is getting cold weather, would be glad to get some reading for myself and boy fourteen years old. He wants Robinson Crusoe, and I would be glad of post cards on my sixtieth birthday, which comes on the nineteenth day of December. Thanking all for past favors, I remain, your lonely old friend. May God be with you all. Mrs. Bettie A. Short, Elamsville, Virginia.

8. Dear *Cheerful Letter* Friends,—I wish to thank you all for your kindness to me in the past. It is impossible to thank you as much as I want to do. I enjoy the *Cheerful Letter*, and it would be hard to do without it. I have had a very hard year, have had sickness in my family all the year. My baby girl is sick now. I have never heard of as much sickness and so many deaths in one year before. I will be so glad when we have a killing frost. I am going to ask you all again to help me with my Christmas tree, as I shall have it as usual. Books, pictures, magazines, anything you may have to spare that will please children and old people will be appreciated by us: if it is old, it will be all right for us who have so little that is pretty. May the Lord bless you all in your noble work! Mrs. J. Porter, R. F. D. No. 3, Doerun, Colquitt County, Georgia.

9. I am teaching now away from home, and writing to ask you if you will change my address from Bumpass, Virginia, to Fredericksburg, Virginia, care of Mr. L. F. Coates. I would be so glad of any good reading for myself and pictures for my school-house. I am getting on real nicely teaching so far. I would appreciate it so much if any of you kind *Cheerful Letter* friends could send me the *Ladies' Home Journal* for the coming year. I hope I am not asking for too much. With best wishes and many thanks for past kindness, I am your true *Cheerful Letter* friend, Miss Maude M. Luck, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

10. Will any one having the following books to spare please notify Mrs. Annie F.

Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass.: "An Old-Fashioned Girl," "In the Schillings Court," "St. Bartholomew's Eve," "The Young Frances-Tireurs," Henty, "Ben Hur," "Paradise Lost," "Lavendar and Old Lace," "The Daughter of Nijo."

Rev. W. A. Alleyn, Burlington, Wisconsin, asks for the following books: a standard History of the United States; Guizot's "History of France"; Sunderland's "Spark in the Clod"; "The Life of T. B. Aldrich," Greenstet; "The Life of Phillips Brooks," Allen; "Messages of Faith, Hope, and Love," James Freeman Clarke.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

MORE ABOUT CHARLES KINGSLEY.

By his Son.

"Perfect love casteth out fear" was the motto on which my father based his theory of bringing up his children, and this theory he put in practice from their babyhood till when he left them as men and women. From this, and from the interest he took in all their pursuits, their pleasures, trials, and even the petty details of their every-day life, there sprang up a "friendship" between father and children that increased in intensity and depth, with years.

To speak for myself,—and yet I know full well I speak for all,—he was the best friend, the only true friend I ever had. At once he was the most fatherly and the most unfatherly of fathers,—fatherly, in that he was our intimate friend and our self-constituted adviser; unfatherly, in that our feeling for him lacked that fear and restraint that make boys call their father "the governor."

I remember him as essentially the same to all of us always,—utterly unchanged and unchanging, since the time that he used to draw Sunday pictures for us, to the time when he treated us as men and women of the world.

Ours was the only household I ever saw in which there was no favoritism. It seemed as if in each of our different characters he took an equal pride, while he fully recognized their different traits of good or evil; for, instead of having one code of social, moral, and physical laws laid down for one and all of us, each child became a separate study for him, and its little "diseases *au moral*," as he called them, were treated differently, according to each different temperament.

The time above all others in which he opened out his heart to us, I think, was

walking over Sunday evenings to the services held in the little school-room, at Bramshill.

I can see him now, on one of those many summer evenings, as he strode out of the back garden-gate with a sorrowful "No! go home, Sweep!" to the retriever that had followed us stealthily down the walk, and who now stood, with an ear cocked and one paw up, hoping against hope that he might be allowed to come on. I can *feel* him striding by me in the narrow path, while from the bright sky and the look of the country he drank in nature, till his eye lit up, his chest expanded, his step grew elastic, and he was a boy again with me. I can *hear* him tell me, at the bottom of the field, of a heavy fall, out hunting, over the fence, into the meadow, and his ringing laugh at the recollection of his own mishap; his cheery "Good afternoon" to the cottager at the corner; the "Well done, boy," and grim smile of approval with which he greeted a jump over the gate at the top of the hill, on which he sat a moment to take in the long sweeps of heather running down to the yellow corn land; the brown roof of the rectory, bursting up among its trees; the long flats of the little valley, with its greens and cricketers. "For cricket," he used to say, "is better than beer, and the poor lads don't get a chance to play on week-days, but remember *you* do."

And then the walk on, over the moor, chatting gayly of the fox's earth hard by, the green tiger-beetle that whirled from under our feet, the night-jar (goat-sucker) that fluttered up from a sandy place in the path, and swooped madly away among the fir-trees, while ever and anon some word would strike a deeper chord, and a few words would be spoken that would put something that mayhap had been an old stumbling-block into an entirely new and true light.

All his deepest teaching, his strongest influence, was in a way of the negative kind, inasmuch as there were no long lectures, no pithy arguments; but in his own life he showed, spoke, and lived his doctrines, so that his utter unselfishness, his genial tenderness towards them and their mother, gave the children an example that could not be passed by unnoticed, however unworthily followed.

The only thing that he really required of us was reverence and respect for people older than ourselves, which was also one of the most strongly marked traits in his own character, and one which made him entirely ignore himself, and his own superiority,

in most cases, in speaking to men older than himself.

This required reverence, however, on our part never created any feeling of restraint when with him. Too true a friendship existed; and perhaps the brightest picture of the past that I look back to now—that we can all look back to—is not the eager look of delight with which he used to hail any of our little successes,—not any special case of approval,—but it is the drawing-room at Eversley in the evenings when we were all at home and by ourselves. There he sat with one hand in mother's, forgetting his own hard work and worry in leading a frolic, with a kindly smile on his lips and a loving light in that bright gray eye that made us feel that in the broadest sense, he was our father.

"To see him with you and the children," said a friend, "was to know what the *man* was. I made that remark when the children were young, and how tenfold more was this the case when they grew up around him."

But to speak of his home without mentioning his love of animals would be to leave the picture incomplete. His dog and his horse were his friends, and they knew it and understood his voice and eye. He was a perfect horseman, and never lost his temper with his horse, talking to, and reasoning with it, if it shied or bolted, as if it had been a rational being, knowing that, from the fine organization of the animal, a horse, like a child, will get confused by panic fear, which is only increased by punishment. His dog Dandy, a fine Scotch terrier, was his companion in all his parish walks, attended at the cottage lectures and school lessons, and was his and the children's friend for thirteen years. He lies buried under the great fir-trees on the rectory lawn, with this inscription on his grave-stone, *Fideli Fideles*; and close by "Sweep," a magnificent black retriever, and "Victor" a favorite Teckel, given him by the Queen, with which he sat up during the two last suffering nights of the little creature's life. Cats, too, were a continual delight to him: the stable had always its white cat, and the house its black or tabby, and he never tired of watching their graceful movements. His love of animals was strengthened by his belief in their future state,—a belief which he held in common with John Wesley and many other remarkable men. On the lawn dwelt a family of natter jacks (running toads) who lived on from year to year in the same hole, in the green bank, which the scythe was never allowed to approach. He had two

little friends in a pair of sand wasps, who lived in a crack of the window in his dressing-room, one of which he had saved from drowning in a hand basin, taking it tenderly out into the sunshine to dry; and every spring he would look out eagerly for them or their children who came out of or returned to the same crack. The little fly-catcher who built its nest every year under his bedroom window was a constant joy to him. He had, also, a favorite slow-worm in the church-yard, which his parishioners were warned not to kill, from the mistaken idea, prevalent in Eversley, that slow-worms are poisonous. All these tastes he encouraged in his children, teaching them to love and handle gently, without disgust, all living things—toads, frogs, beetles—as works and wonders from the hand of the living God. His guests were surprised one morning at breakfast when his little girl ran up to the open window of the dining-room, holding a long, repulsive-looking worm in her hand. "Oh! daddy, look at this *worm*." He had but one aversion, which he could never conquer,—to a spider, and it was of himself he spoke in "Glaucus," after saying "that every one seems to have his antipathic animal. I know one bred from his childhood to zoölogy by land and sea, and bold in asserting and honest in feeling, that all without exception is beautiful, who yet cannot, after handling and petting and examining all day long every uncouth and venomous beast, avoid a paroxysm of horror at the sight of a common house spider."

But, after all, he often said a bird was to him the most wonderful of God's creations: he watched for the arrival of the birds of passage every spring with a strange longing, and seemed less restless after the swallow appeared at Eversley. His eyes would fill with tears at each fresh arrival, and again each autumn as he grieved over their departure.

He knew their every note, and was never tired of watching their character and habits.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE BIRD.

It is not perhaps widely known, since it is a somewhat later development, that wood-peckers are making discoveries to better their conditions. The redhead is cultivating the habit of a fly-catcher, and has become expert in securing his food from the air, although he is plainly built for the more difficult labor of digging it out of a tree trunk.

The golden-winged wood-pecker has dis-

covered an easier way to prepare a nursery than following the laborious habits of his ancestors, the modern flicker cutting through the softer boards of our buildings and finding snug and safe quarters within. At one place the turrets of a Western college where I spent a summer were occupied by flickers, with English sparrows for tenants. How they managed the domestic arrangements inside I could not discover, but both birds used the same entrance, which was plainly the work of the wood-pecker's pickaxe.

This bird has also abandoned the ways of his fathers in the matter of food, and now-a-days finds his provisions, or a large part of them, around the ant-hills on the ground. As many as three thousand ant skulls have been found in the stomach of one flicker.

Another of the intelligent family, the yellow-bellied sapsucker, gave up the laborious use of the pickaxe in food-hunting so long ago that he has lost the power of thrusting his tongue far beyond the end of his beak, which was a necessity in the life of his ancestors,

Woodpeckers are not the only birds intelligent enough to take advantage of opportunities to better themselves. At a certain place on the coast of New Jersey, where seine fishing is common, the osprey, or fish-hawk, has discovered that men—if not more expert than himself at his own trade—have at any rate greater success, and he has happily accommodated himself to the new conditions, and accepted the services of men as his providence. When the time comes for drawing the seine, fish-hawks place themselves on every available point of vantage, gathering from a distance all about, watch the scene with interest, and, when the great, struggling mass is drawn up onto the land, pounce upon the tempting display and carry off their catch without wetting a feather. They are not indiscriminate fishers, either: they select the morsel they desire, the first choice being the tencer Spanish mackerel (or so it is reported), which certainly shows their good taste, as every fish-lover on the coast will admit.

More extraordinary still is the degree of intelligence thus stated by Professor Headley. He says: "Pheasants learn by experience to distinguish a rifle from a shot-gun. The former has no terrors for them, and they will feed quietly while the bullets pass over them. I have seen the same complete indifference to the noise of rifle-shooting in the great spotted woodpecker."

Birds are not obliged to do as their parents

do. They constantly learn by experience and alter their habits. "Most birds," says a modern British observer and writer, "are ready to vary their habits suddenly, and *de novo*, if they can get a little profit on the transaction."

The intelligence of the jay family is shown by the experience of a naturalist who studied and photographed a nest of Canada jays in the West. The birds, at first very wild, finding that he did not frighten or disturb them, became so tame that the female would doze on the nest in the most unconcerned manner when he was near enough to touch her, and calmly feed her nestlings while his hand rested on the nest.

It is not so remarkable that game birds, through a long course of persecution at the hands of men, should develop the unusual intelligence which is exhibited by the scaup ducks in Florida. At Titusville, where no shooting is allowed along the waterfront, wild scaup ducks swim, dive, and dress their plumage as unconcernedly along the wharves and beach at the hotel as if there were not a man in sight. They sometimes come ashore, and walk about on the grass near the hotel. They swim at ease among the small craft at the wharves, and act much like domesticated ducks; but, when the same birds get out on the river beyond the dead line where gunning is not prohibited, they can hardly be approached within gun-shot by a fast-sailing boat.

Mr. Bolles gives an interesting account of an experiment he made with a great blue heron, which shows that the bird did not fear what was simply strange, but that which he had learned by experience was dangerous, as indicating the vicinity of man. After he had observed him as long as he cared to, Mr. Bolles began to whistle, to start up the heron (I should say that he was hidden, but quite near the bird). The heron stopped dressing his plumage, and looked towards Mr. Bolles's hiding place with no fear, only curiosity. Mr. Bolles sang, but the bird only stared without moving. Then he tried animal sounds,—barking, mewling, etc.,—and at last came down to plain spoken English, supposing, of course, that the human voice would alarm him. But the bird remained in composure, evidently entertained, and showing no desire to depart, till suddenly, in moving his foot, Mr. Bolles snapped a small twig, when like a shot the heron was on the wing. That sound he recognized, and experience had taught him to fear it, because connected with the presence of a man.—"*The Bird our Brother*," Olive Thorne Miller.

WORKHOUSE GIRLS.

Beside the poor sick and aged people in the workhouse, the attention of Miss Elliot and myself was much drawn to the girls who were sent out from thence to service on attaining (about) their sixteenth year. On all hands, and notably from Miss Twining and from some excellent Irish philanthropists, we heard the most deplorable reports of the incompetence of the poor children to perform the simplest duties of domestic life, and their consequent dismissal from one place after another till they ended in ruin. It was stated at the time (1862), on good authority, that, on tracing the subsequent history of eighty girls who had been brought up in a single London workhouse, *every one* was found to be on the streets! In short, these hapless "children of the State," as my friend Miss Florence Davenport Hill most properly named them, seemed at that time as if they were being trained on purpose to fall into a life of sin, having nothing to keep them out of it,—no friends, no affections, no homes, nor training for any kind of useful labor, no habits of self-control or self-guidance.

It was never realized by the *men* (who in those days alone managed our pauper system) that girls cannot be trained *en masse* to be general servants, nurses, cooks, or anything else. The strict routine, the vast half-furnished wards, the huge utensils, and furnaces of a large workhouse have too little in common with the ways of family life and the furniture of a common kitchen to furnish any sort of practicing ground for household service. The "Report of the Royal Commission on Education," issued about that time, concluded that workhouse schools leave the pauper taint on the children, *but* "that District and separate schools give an education to the children contained in them which effectually tends to emancipate them from pauperism." Accordingly the vast District schools, containing each the children from many Unions, were then in full blast, and the girls were taught extremely well to read, write, and cypher; but were neither taught to cook for any ordinary household, nor to scour, sweep, or nurse, or serve the humblest table. What was far more deplorable, they were not, and could not be, taught to love or trust any human being, since no one loved or cared for them; or to exercise even so much self-control as should help them to forbear from stealing lumps of sugar out of the first bowl left in their way. "But," we may be told, "they received ex-

cellent religious instruction!" Let any one try to realize the idea of God which any child can possibly reach *who has never been loved*, and he will then perhaps rightly estimate the value of such "religious instruction" in a dreary pauper school. I have never quite seen the force of the argument, "If a man love not his neighbor whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" But the converse is very clear. "If a man *hath not been beloved* by his neighbor or his parents, how shall he believe in the Love of the invisible God?" Religion is a plant which grows and flourishes in an atmosphere of a certain degree of warmth and softness, but not in the Frozen Zone of lovelessness, wherein is no sweetness, no beauty, no tenderness.

How to prevent the girls who left Bristol Workhouse from falling into the same gulf as the unhappy ones in London occupied very much the thoughts of Miss Elliot and her sister and myself in 1859 and 1860-61.

Miss Elliot and her sister, as I have said, resided at that time with their father at the old Bristol Deanery, close to the Cathedral in College Green. This house was known to every one in the city, which was a great advantage at starting. A Sunday afternoon school for workhouse girls only was opened by the two kind and wise sisters, and soon frequented by a happy little class. The first step in each case (which eventually fell chiefly to my share of the business) was to receive notice from the workhouse of the address of every girl when sent out to her first service, and thereupon to go at once and call on her new mistress, and ask her permission for the little servant's attendance at the Deanery class. As Miss Elliot wrote most truly, in speaking of the need of haste in this preliminary visit:—

"There are few times in a girl's life when kindness is more valued by her, or more necessary to her, than when she is taken from the shelter and routine of school life and plunged suddenly and alone into a new struggling world, full of temptations and trials. That this is the turning point in the life of many I feel confident, and I think delay in beginning friendly intercourse most dangerous: they, like other human beings, will seek friends of some kind. We found them very ready to take good ones if the chance were offered, and, as it seemed, grateful for such chance. But, good failing them, they will most assuredly find bad ones."

As a rule the mistresses, who were all of the humbler sort and of course persons of good reputation, seemed to welcome my

rather intrusive visit and questions, which were of course made with every possible courtesy. A little by-play about the insufficient outfit given by the workhouse and an offer of small additional adornments for Sundays was generally well received; and the happy fact of having such an ostensibly and unmistakably respectable address for the Sunday-school secured many assents which might otherwise have been denied. The mistresses were generally in a state of chronic vexation at their little servants' stupidity and incompetence, and on this head I could produce great effect by inveighing against the useless workhouse education.

There was often difficulty in getting leave of absence for the girls on Sunday afternoon; but, with the patience and good humor of the teachers (who gave their lessons to as many or as few as came to them), there was always something of a class, and the poor girls themselves were most eager to lose no chance of attending.

A little reading of "Pilgrim's Progress" and other good books, more explanations and talk, much hymn singing and repeating of hymns learned during the week, and a penny banking account,—such were some of the devices of the kind teachers to reach the hearts of their little pupils. And very effectually they did so, as the thirty letters which they wrote between them to Miss Elliot, when she, or they, left Bristol, testified.

The whole experiment was marvellously successful. Nearly all the poor children seemed to have been improved in various ways, as well as certainly made happier by their Sundays at the Deanery; and not one of them, I believe, turned out ill afterwards or fell into any serious trouble. Many of them married respectably. In short, it proved to be a good plan, which we have had no hesitation in recommending ever since.

The wretched holes under stairs, or in cellars or garrets, where these girls were made to sleep, were often most unhealthy; and their exposure to cold, with only the thin workhouse cotton frock, leaving arms and neck bare, was cruel in winter. One day I had an example of this, not easily to be forgotten. I had just received notice that a girl of sixteen had been sent from the workhouse (Bristol or Clifton, I forget which) to a place in St. Philip's, at the far end of Bristol. It was a snowy day; but I walked to the place with the same odd conviction over me of which I have spoken, that I was bound to go at *once*. When I reached the

house, I found it was one a little above the usual class for workhouse-girl servants and had an area. The snow was falling fast, and, as I knocked, I looked down into the area and saw a girl in her cotton dress standing out at a wash-tub,—head, neck, and arms all bare, and the snow falling on them with a bitter wind eddying through the area. Presently the door was opened, and there stood the girl, in such a condition of bronchitis as I hardly ever saw in my life. When the mistress appeared, I told her civilly that I was very sorry, but that the girl was in mortal danger of inflammation of the lungs and *must* be put to bed immediately. "Oh, that was entirely out of the question." "But it *must* be done," I said. Eventually, after much angry altercation, the woman consented to my fetching a fly, putting the girl into it, driving with her to the infirmary (for which I had always tickets), and leaving her there in charge of a friendly doctor. Next day when I called to inquire, he told me she could scarcely have lived after another hour of exposure, and that she could recover only by the most stringent and immediate treatment. It was another instance of the verification of my superstition.

Of course we tried to draw attention generally to the need for some supervision of the poor workhouse girls throughout the country. I wrote and read at a Social Science Congress a paper on "Friendless Girls and How to Help Them," giving a full account of Miss Stephen's admirable "Preventive Mission"; and this I had reason to hope aroused some interest. Several years later Miss Elliot wrote a charming little book with full details about her girls and their letters, "Workhouse Girls: Notes of an Attempt to Help Them," published by Nisbet. Also we managed to get numerous articles and letters into newspapers touching on workhouse abuses and needs generally. Miss Elliot, having many influential friends, was able to do a great deal in the way of getting our ideas put before the public. I used to write my papers after coming home in the evening and often late into the night. Sometimes, when I was very anxious that something should go off by the early morning mail, I got out of the side window of my sitting-room at two or three o'clock in the morning, and walked the half mile to the solitary post-office near the "Black Boy" (pillar posts were undreamed of in those days), and then climbed in at the window again, to sleep soundly!—*Autobiography Frances Power Cobbe.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

DOUBLE ZIGZAG.

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CROSS WORDS.—I. A beetle. 2. Driven around. 3. A sweetmeat made of fruit. 4. Having the form of fingers. 5. Cowardly. 6. Representing sounds. 7. A serpent. 8. A tropical tree, the fruit of which is a substitute for bread. 9. Days exempt from work. 10. Associates.

The zigzags from 1 to 10 will spell the patron saint of childhood, whose festival occurs on December sixth; from 11 to 20 a name sometimes given to the four weeks before Christmas.—*St. Nicholas*.

II.

CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. Patriotic Rider.
2. Brilliancy's Forerunner.
3. Debater Wonderful.
4. Makes Travesties.
5. Everywhere Known.

III.

WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS.

1. F. H-P-I- -S- - -M- -H.
2. W-N- -O- -H- -C-I- -.
3. - -L-N G- -S-O-.
4. -H-M- - N-L- -N -A-E.
5. E. P-I- -I-S -P-E- -E- -.

IV.

GAME OF THE STATES.

1. What State reminds you of a great rainfall?
2. What State can be often multiplied?

3. What State commences the domestic week?

4. What State is mightier than the sword?

5. What State is always sure of itself?

6. What State has a medical degree?

7. What State is a chronic invalid?

8. What State is found in bulk?

9. What State suggests a sheltered spot?

Every Other Sunday.

Answers to Puzzles in the November Number.

I. DISHES FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER.—Potato, Turkey, Onions, Cider, Turnip, Beet, Pies, Cranberry Sauce, Nuts, Raisins, Soup.

II. HEROES AND HEROINES.—1. Tale of Two Cities. 2. Come and Find Me. 3. Nicholas Nickleby. 4. Merchant of Venice. 5. Tom Brown at Rugby.

III. NUMERICAL PUZZLE. 1. Henry Irving. 2. Stephen A. Douglas. 3. Samuel Adams. 4. William Bradford. 5. John Davis.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

The Editor earnestly hopes for the farther development of humane work during the year that is about to open. No doubt, many of our members do all that they can in this direction. But there must be schools in different parts of our country, where the children would gladly accept such papers as *Our Dumb Animals* and *Our Four-footed Friends*; and there may be a field here for usefulness not yet covered and an opportunity to give pleasure not yet fully perceived.

Will not every teacher who reads our paper, and whose scholars are not yet amply provided with the two papers mentioned, send a written request to our Book-club Secretary, Mrs. Nichols, asking for copies (as many as can be used)?

And, on the other hand, will not all who are subscribing for these papers, and not sending them to correspondents, definitely offer them in the Book Club, either to schools or individuals?

We should like to see such offers every month in our paper.

Determine to go onward.

Invite Earnestness and Love to be your travelling companions, to guide, support, and to enlighten you.—*Fredrika Bremer*.

The sermon in this number is Dr. Clarke's last Christmas sermon.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

The *Cheerful Letter* Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

Apply to Mrs. Irene C. Rees, 51 Orchard Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

There will be a meeting of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange on Friday, December 3, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

The Home Study Work of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange offers to help those who wish to improve their education. Lessons will be given in all subjects which can be taught by correspondence, such as Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Algebra, all branches of English, History, Botany, Geography, Languages, Drawing, etc.

Requests for these lessons should be sent to Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to Headquarters.

The Editor asks POSTMASTERS who send notices of changes of address not to send these notices to the Editor, but to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Any subscriber not receiving the paper regularly is requested to notify the Secretary.

Chairman, Miss Helen L. Bayley, 399 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass.

Editor of "The *Cheerful Letter*," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Secretary, Mrs. Lily Blunt Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.